

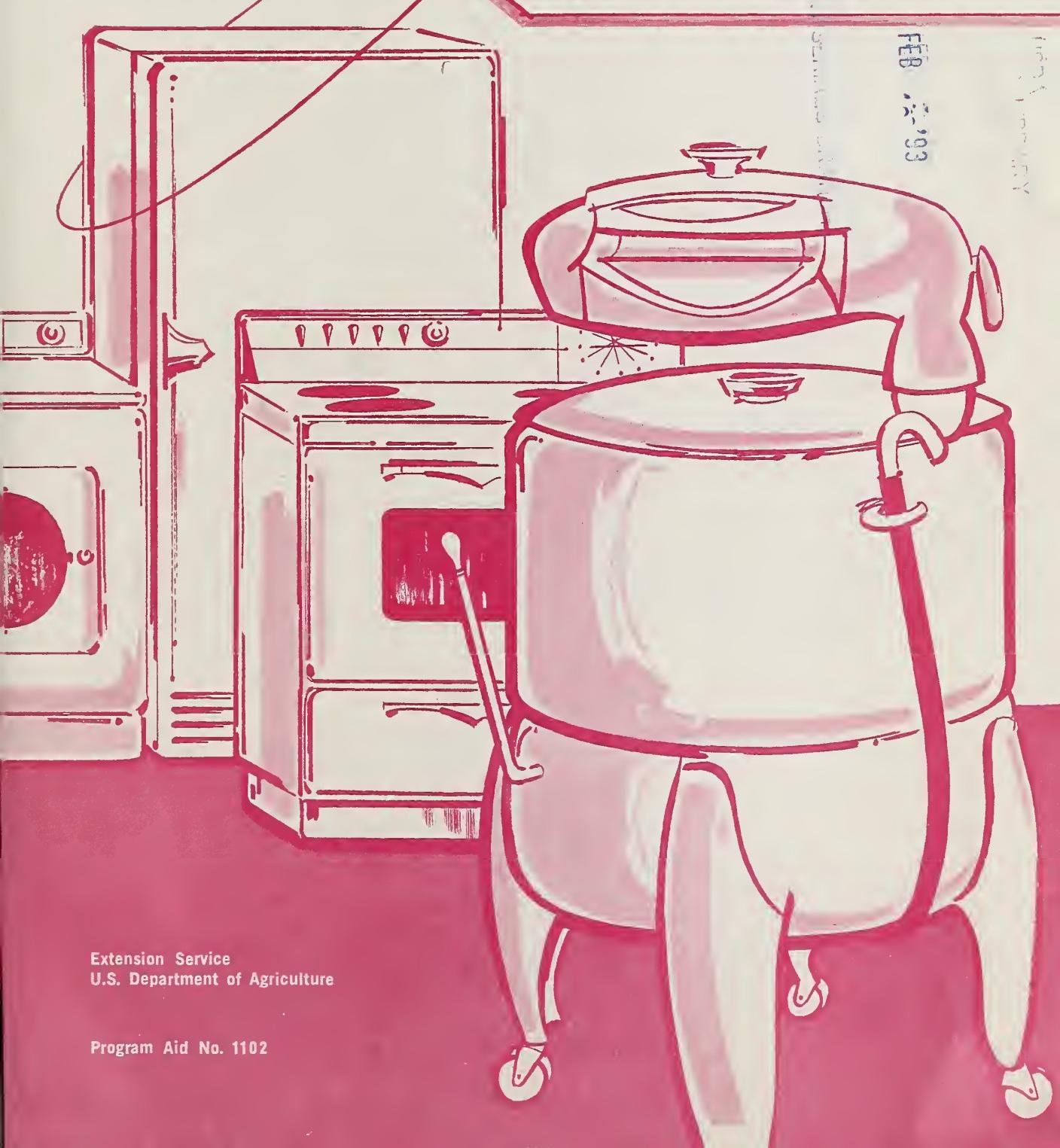
Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1102

PA 1102

BUYING A USED APPLIANCE

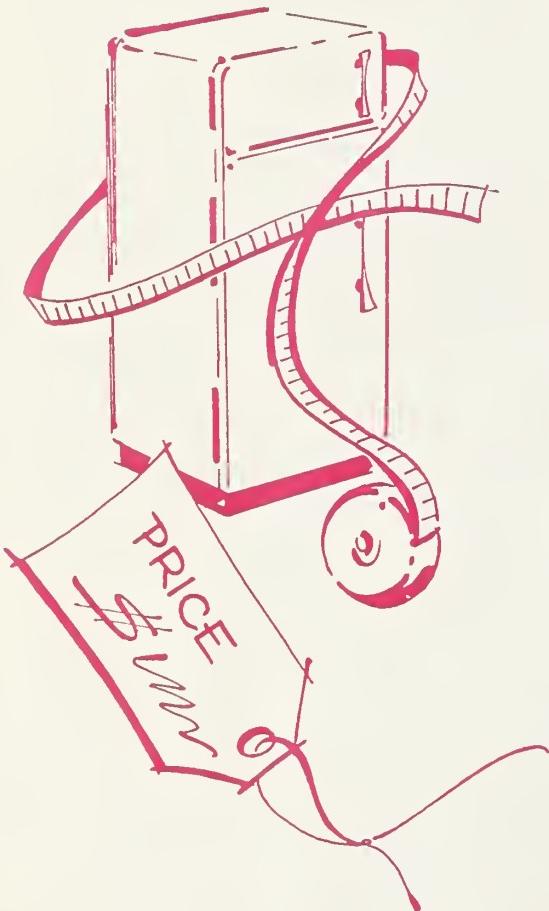


Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Program Aid No. 1102

BUYING A USED APPLIANCE

by GLENDA PIFER,
Housing Specialist



A used appliance may be a welcome addition to a recreation room, a first home, or a vacation home. When money is limited, or an unexpected need arises, finding a good used appliance at a reduced cost may rescue the family budget.

There is a certain amount of risk involved when you buy used appliances. But you can make it less of a gamble by careful planning and shopping. Used appliances range from nearly new to almost junk.

A good shopper will look for appliances that will fill a need, fit the available space, and be within the family's price range.

Before shopping for a used appliance, look over the new models. Get acquainted with new features and cost. Compare features on the less expensive models with those on more expensive models. This will help you judge whether the price of the used equipment is reasonable.

Don't buy a lot of extra features you will not use. Economy models will do the same jobs and probably cost less to repair if something goes wrong.

To make a successful purchase, you must be informed about the equipment you are considering. Is it good quality for the money? Do you need it more than you need to buy something else?

If you buy colored appliances, you may have trouble matching them in the future because colors change every now and then. But it may add just the right cheerful touch to your room.

WHERE TO LOOK

Used appliances may be found in some appliance stores, at garage sales or auctions, Good Will or Salvation Army stores, in newspaper ads, and on bulletin boards at apartment houses or shopping centers. Friends or neighbors may sometimes offer them for sale.

New, but freight-damaged appliances can sometimes be bought at a greatly reduced cost. Demonstrator models usually have had limited use and good care. These are sold by department or appliance stores when new models come out. Moving and storage companies sell unclaimed



THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- Are the cord, plug, and wiring in good condition?
- Is the appliance clean? Exterior? Interior? Motor?
- Does it look as if it has had good care? Is it free from scratches, dents, rust, and rough spots?
- If this is an electrical appliance, does it have the Underwriters Seal on the nameplate?
- If it is a gas appliance, does it have the American Gas Association Seal on it?



household goods held in storage. Stores occasionally sell older models of new appliances at a reduced price to get rid of them. Sometimes school home economics departments sell used appliances when they get new ones.

TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

The term "rebuilt appliance" indicates that the used appliance has been checked, repaired, and is in working condition. It may carry a store guarantee for a limited period of time. Usually, this is not more than 90 days.

A "reconditioned appliance" usually means the appliance has been cleaned; sometimes painted, and put in working condition.

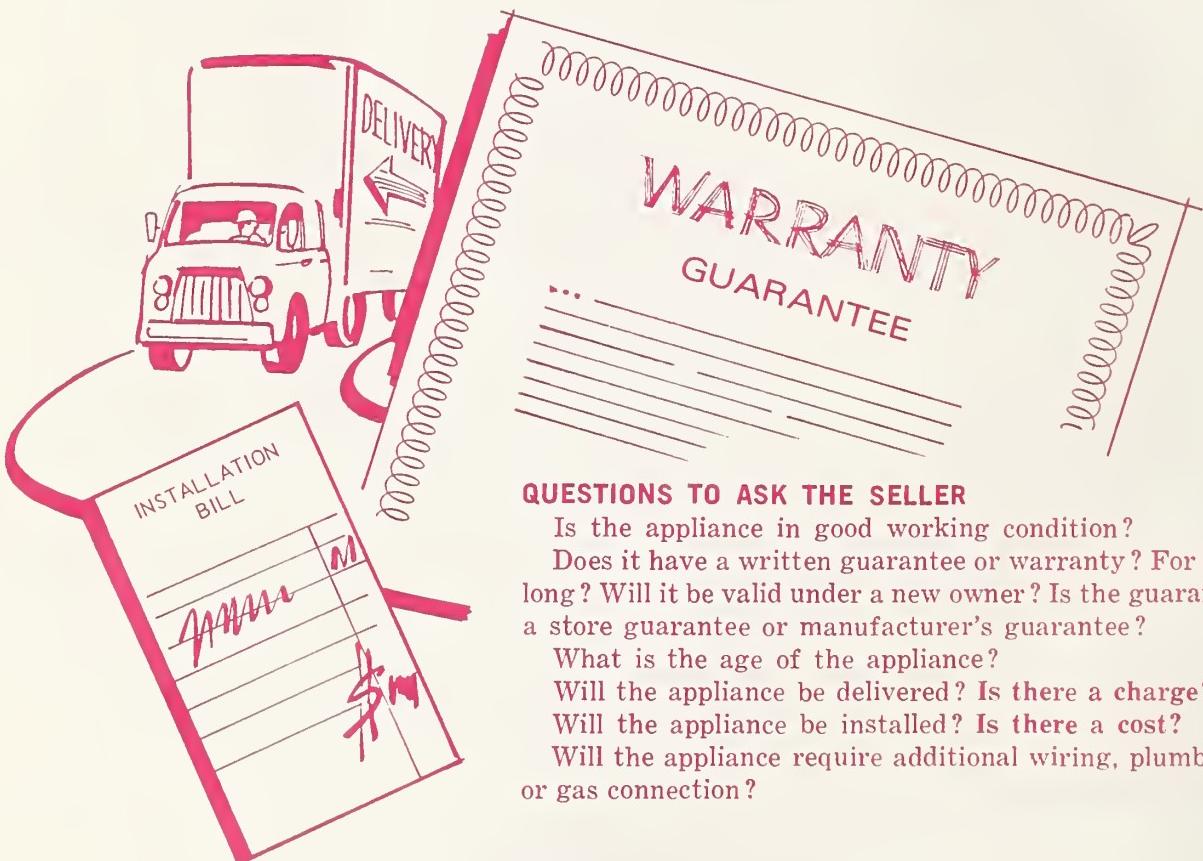
An "as is" appliance means that it is being offered for sale in the condition you find it in. It may or may not be in working condition and may or may not be clean. It most likely will not have a guarantee. It will probably be priced lower than a similar appliance that has been rebuilt or reconditioned.

"Freight damaged" indicates the appliance is new but has been damaged in the shipping process. The damage may be a surface scratch or dent which won't hurt its performance. If severely damaged, it may not work correctly or look good.

When buying damaged appliances, you need to evaluate the extent of the damage and consider the cost of any needed repairs. You may want to check with a serviceman on repair problems that may arise and how much they will cost.

"Unclaimed freight" usually is new merchandise not claimed at the delivery point.

- Will this appliance satisfy your needs?
- Will this appliance fit the space available in your home?
- Does the cost seem reasonable when you compare it with other used appliances or a new appliance?
- Are the controls located conveniently?
- Are the controls easy to operate?
- Is there a signal light to indicate if the equipment is in operation?
- Will the appliance be easy to use and clean?



QUESTIONS TO ASK THE SELLER

- Is the appliance in good working condition?
- Does it have a written guarantee or warranty? For how long? Will it be valid under a new owner? Is the guarantee a store guarantee or manufacturer's guarantee?
- What is the age of the appliance?
- Will the appliance be delivered? Is there a charge?
- Will the appliance be installed? Is there a cost?
- Will the appliance require additional wiring, plumbing, or gas connection?

POINTS TO CONSIDER IN BUYING

Listed below are some points to look for in buying used appliances. You can decide which features are important for your needs.

REFRIGERATOR

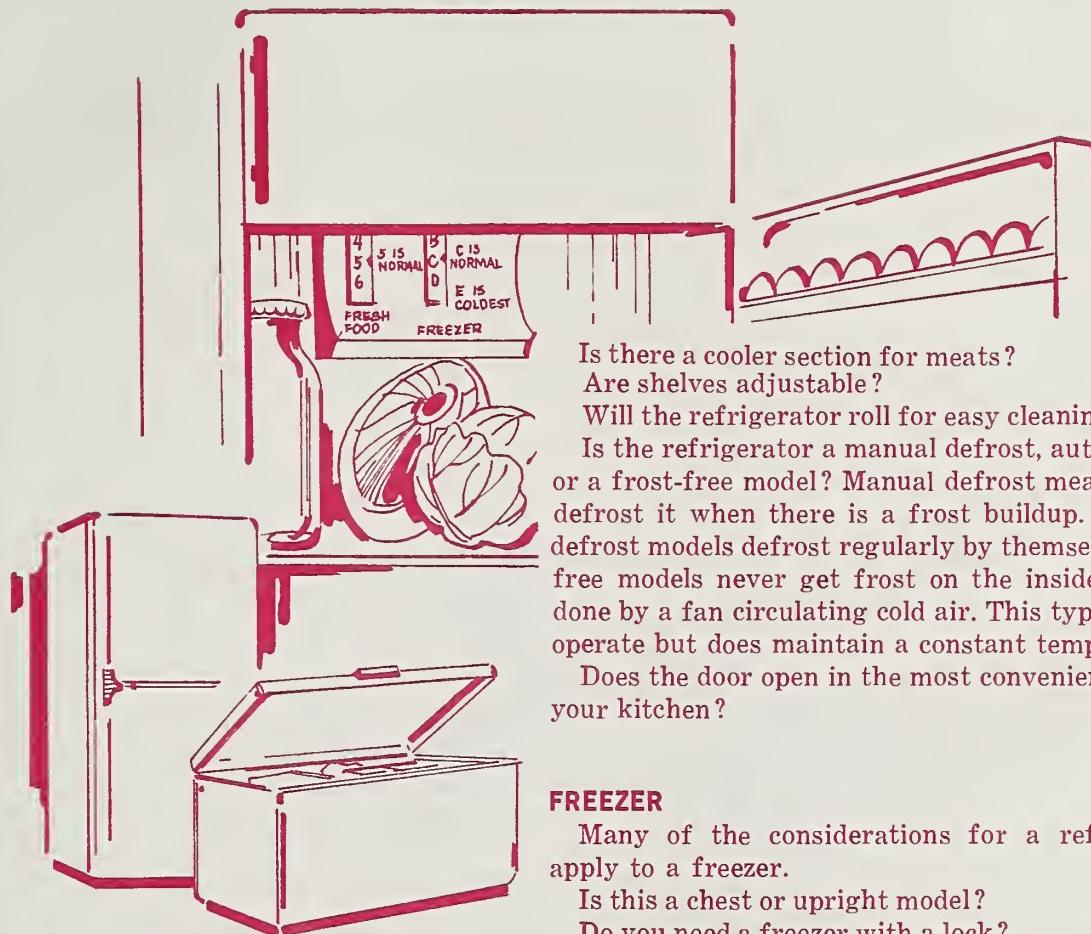
Amount of cooling space.

Amount of freezing space.

Separate temperature controls for the freezer and refrigerator.

Temperature in the cooling area should be 32° to 45° F.

Temperature in the freezing compartment should be 0° to 10° F.



Is there a cooler section for meats?
Are shelves adjustable?

Will the refrigerator roll for easy cleaning.

Is the refrigerator a manual defrost, automatic defrost, or a frost-free model? Manual defrost means you have to defrost it when there is a frost buildup. The automatic defrost models defrost regularly by themselves. The frost-free models never get frost on the inside, as cooling is done by a fan circulating cold air. This type costs more to operate but does maintain a constant temperature.

Does the door open in the most convenient direction for your kitchen?

FREEZER

Many of the considerations for a refrigerator also apply to a freezer.

Is this a chest or upright model?

Do you need a freezer with a lock?

Will this freezer maintain zero temperature?

WASHER

Automatic

Top- or front-loading model?

What size load will it take?

Does it give you a choice of:

- Hot, warm, or cold water wash
- Warm or cold water rinse
- Small load and regular load
- Short cycle and a longer cycle

Are controls easy to understand and operate?

Some washers fill in a given time. Others fill to a certain depth, which is controlled by a float. A float fill is best if local water pressure varies.

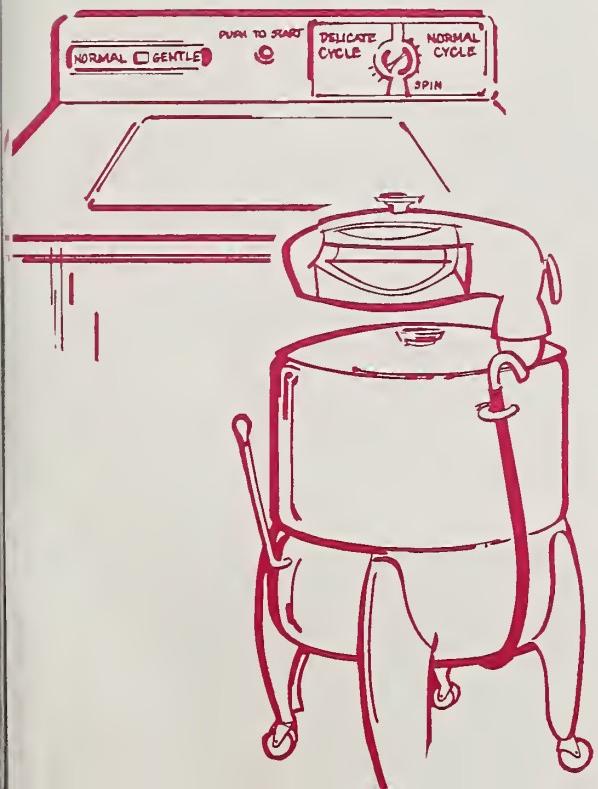
Dispensers for bleach and fabric conditioner?

Is there a safety switch to stop action when the lid or door is opened?

Non-Automatic

Check to see if the wringer rollers are in good condition. Can you move the wringer arms to other positions easily?

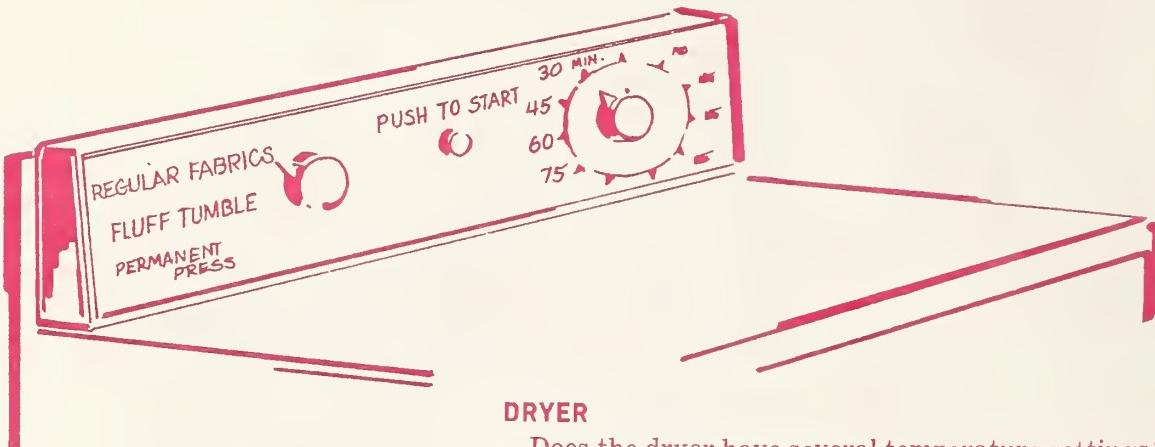
Is there a safety release on the wringer?



Can you move the washer easily?

Find out how the washer drains. Does it have a pump system and an attached hose, or will you need to drain it into a container or a floor drain?

Does the agitator fit firmly?



DRYER

Does the dryer have several temperature settings?

Will the dryer stop when the door is opened?

Will the dryer stop automatically when the clothes are dry?

Is there a signal to remind you that the dryer is stopping?

Is the lint trap located in the front where you can reach it easily?



RANGES (Gas or Electric)

Does it have the features you really need? Check the oven door to see that it closes tightly. Check the hinges to see that they work satisfactorily.

Is the oven liner in satisfactory condition? Are there at least two oven racks? Are they adjustable? Do the racks lock so that they will not tip when pulled forward? Are the oven racks free from rust?

Examine the top for ease of cleaning. Is the thermostat (temperature control) for the oven working right? If the range you're looking at is still installed, you can test this. Take along an oven thermometer and check the oven temperature at several different settings of the oven temperature control. Or, get a written guarantee from the seller that the control is accurate.

Electric

Check the units to learn if the entire element heats.

Are surface units relatively smooth and flat?

Check to see if the baking unit in the bottom and the broiler unit in the top both heat.

Does the oven have self-cleaning or continuous cleaning features? Models with this feature cost more, but are convenient.

Gas

Does the oven light automatically or by match? Automatic is safer and more convenient.

Check the oven vent. See that nothing is blocking it.

Are the controls located so they are easy to use and designed for safety?

Is the broiler unit easy to use?



YOU MAKE THE DECISION

After careful study and shopping around, you should be able to select the best value for your money. Judge the quality and suitability of the appliance based on your needs and what you can pay.

Once the appliance is yours, clean it, learn how to use it, and give it the same care you would a new appliance.

TO USE AND CARE FOR YOUR APPLIANCES

Because appliances are mechanical, they require care, cleaning, and occasional service. Read and follow instructions in the use and care booklet.

If the appliance does not function, check:

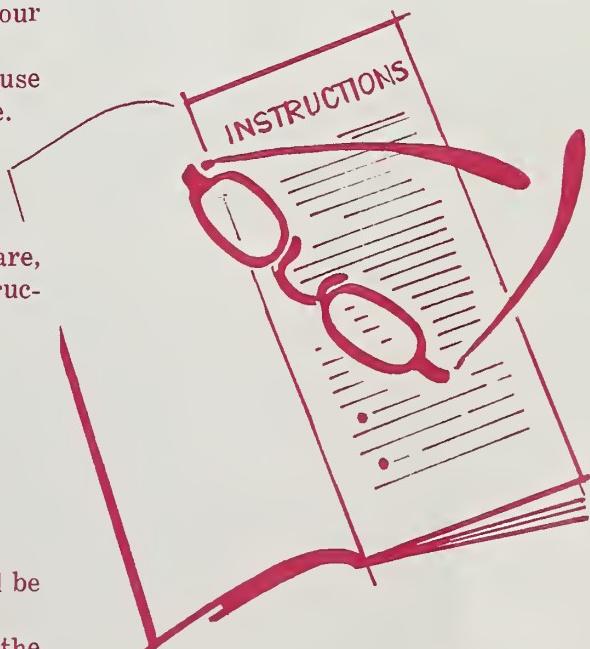
Electric Appliance

- if it is plugged into the outlet;
- if a fuse has blown.

Gas Appliance

- if the pilot light is lit;
- if controls are properly adjusted, the flame should be blue.

To find a serviceman, check with a store that sells the same brand of appliances. If they do not have a service department or there is not a service center close, ask them to recommend an authorized serviceman.





Cooperative Extension Work: United States Department
of Agriculture and State Land-Grant Universities Co-
operating. Issued November 1974.